

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

Thursday, September 10, 2009

William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

I. ATTENDANCE

Members Present

Mr. Kevin Flynn, Chair	Representing Mr. Gary Sasse, Chair, RI Department of Administration
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, II, Secretary	Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Robert Azar	Representing Mr. Thomas Deller, City of Providence, Planning & Development
Ms. Sharon Conard Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation
Mr. Christopher Long	Representing Mr. Timothy Costa
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	Budget Office
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	Town of South Kingstown Planning Department
Mr. Michael Rauh	Environmental Advocate
Mr. Bob Shawver	Representing Mr. Michael Lewis, RI DOT
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Mr. Steve Cardi, Public Member
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Ms. Janet White-Raymond	Public Member

Members Absent

Ms. Susan Baxter	RI Housing Resources Commission
Mr. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	City of East Providence, Planning Development
Mr. Peter Osborn	Federal Highway Administration
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Mr. William Sequino	Public Member

Guests

Mr. Greg Bonyng	University of Rhode Island Environmental Data Center
Mr. Ames Colt, Ph.D.	Bay, Rivers & Watershed Coordination Team
Mr. Chris MacFadyen	House Policy

Staff - Division of Planning

Mr. Robert Griffith, Ph.D.	Chief, Statewide Planning
Ms. Dawn Vittorioso	Executive Assistant
Mr. Shane White	GIS Coordinator, Statewide Planning

II. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Mr. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

2. Approval of June 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Trevor moved to approve the Minutes of August 13, 2009, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. White. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. CEDS Certification Procedure

Mr. Flynn announced that a small amount (\$150M, nationally) of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) is available for CEDS Projects. Since the initial CEDS reviews were already done, staff recommends a Fast Track (please see the attached) procedure for the CEDS Certification needed to allow applicants to apply for these funds.

Mr. Flynn pointed out that the process is similar to what is done today. The primary difference is that less information is required from the applicant and it will not involve a ranking of the projects. Applications would be reviewed solely to see if they meet threshold criteria. Once determined, it would go to the CEDS Subcommittee, Technical Committee, and the State Planning Council for approval. Applications would be processed on a rolling basis.

Mr. Griffith emphasized that all applications that go through this process will be CEDS certified for ARRA funding only. Applicants seeking to go onto the regular priority list can apply at the next solicitation, which is March, 2010.

Mr. Rauh motioned to approve and Ms. White seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and carried.

4. Rhode Island Digital Atlas

Mr. Flynn introduced Mr. Shane White, GIS Coordinator and Mr. Greg Bonyng from the University of Rhode Island Environmental Data Center (URI-EDC). Mr. Flynn gave an overview of the latest initiatives with RIGIS. Starting last year, the Statewide Planning Program has been working with the URI-EDC through a contractual relationship to continue maintenance of the RIGIS database and website that provides a means to access it. This funding covers 40% of Greg Bonyng's time, which is then dedicated to this effort. The latest initiatives with the RIGIS website include better communication of upcoming events and changes to the RIGIS database and website, and the development of a new online web mapping tool called the Rhode Island Digital Atlas.

Utilizing the RIGIS website to produce maps can be a challenging experience for those who are not comfortable working with files intended for use by Geographic Information System (software). The Rhode Island Digital Atlas is a new website that is under development that is poised to help non-GIS users tap into the wealth of data available from RIGIS. The development of the Rhode Island Digital Atlas is being led by Greg Bonyng of the University of Rhode Island's Geospatial Extension Program. The intent of the Atlas is simply to provide easy access to useful maps that take full advantage of the RIGIS database. The Atlas offers maps that accommodate users whose computer skills vary widely. Pre-authored maps of communities and watersheds are available which are designed to print easily. An option is being built that will empower users to zoom into an area of interest within Rhode Island. The same maps are also accessible using Google Earth, and for those comfortable with using GIS software, it is possible to tap into the same online map services to complement an existing GIS. The development of another component of the Atlas, watershed and community resource profiles, is also well underway. The purpose of a resource profile is to serve as a collection of maps and associated tabular data that describe a particular community or watershed, particularly from a natural resource point of view. These profiles are anticipated to serve as a quick reference for those interested in learning more information about any given municipality or watershed in Rhode Island.

During the presentation comments made are summarized as follows:

- Mr. Rhodes explained prior to the creation of the Rhode Island Digital Atlas, individuals wanting to obtain this information were required to have the appropriate GIS software and the technical knowledge of how to use it. This is a significant improvement with the public's ability to access this information.
- Mr. Rhodes asked if additional GIS map layers can be analyzed simultaneously. Mr. Bonyng responded and demonstrated the slider tool in Google Earth that can be utilized to adjust the transparency of a selected map layer.
- Mr. Rauh inquired if this program can utilize a city's or town's parcel data. Mr. Bonyng responded and demonstrated the ability to connect to the URI web map server to obtain up-to-date parcel information through the RIGIS website.
- Mr. Azar asked if legends are available for the chosen maps. Mr. Bonyng responded that Google Earth does not provide that functionality. Mr. White explained that Google Earth is meant for exploratory usage.
- Mr. Azar asked if the Pictometry aerial photography displayed on the RIGIS Rhode Island Digital Atlas can be downloaded. Mr. Bonyng stated that due to a license agreement, between RI E-911 and Pictometry International, the information can not be redistributed. However, the information can be shown over the web using a web mapping tool like the Rhode Island Digital Atlas.

- Mr. Rauh asked if traffic count information is available on the RIGIS website. Mr. Bonyng responded that it is available, however, it is dated.
- Mr. Rauh asked if US Census data is available on the RIGIS website. Mr. Bonyng responded that it is not available; however, he is working with his colleagues to determine how to best integrate the information into the RIGIS database.

At this time, Mr. White explained that the Rhode Island Digital Atlas is available for immediate use on the RIGIS website at <http://www.edc.uri.edu/RIGIS/>

5. Chief's Progress Report

Land Use

- Paul Gonsalves, with Nancy Hess' guidance, has convened the first meeting of the Advisory Committee (Ken Payne, Jeff Willis, Nicholas Ucci, and Janet Keller) to begin drafting an updated Energy Element to the State Guide Plan. The format of this update is intended to follow the format of LU 2025, dealing with questions such as where we are, where we are going, where do we want to be and how do we get there. The second meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9th.
- Water Supply Policies and Management Plans are also underway. The Advisory Committee will be meeting on September 29th to discuss the Watershed Plan. The Advisory Committee will be working to facilitate the signing of MOU between NBEP and CT for the update and synthesis of the CCMP and SLP into a consolidated plan for the State of RI.
- Challenge Grant applications are underway; the deadline has been extended from September 18th to October 2nd, at the request of several communities.

Transportation

- We are engaged in the Program's quadrennial Federal Highway/Federal Transportation Administrator's Recertification process. An all-day workshop has been scheduled for September 30, 2009 (please see the attached agenda draft). The Transportation Advisory Committee meeting will follow immediately. We are encouraging all members to join the meeting to share thoughts on the effectiveness of the processes that the Division of Planning administers on the behalf of the Public and Council members.

Comprehensive Planning

- Since the last presentation to the Council members, we have completed the review of the current draft with the Technical Committee. The staff incorporated the feedback we received into the revised draft. The presentation has been distributed back to the Implementation Committee for review. A scheduled meeting was to immediately follow today's meeting, however, due to attendance concerns, the meeting has been postponed. Another meeting with the Implementation Committee will be scheduled for later this month. The final report will be presented to the Technical Committee in October for adoption. We are simultaneously continuing our efforts to draft the proposed amendments to the enabling legislation soon thereafter.

Administrative

- We received 60 applications for the Assistant Chief and 45 applications for the Supervising Planner position; including many extremely qualified candidates. Unfortunately, with the budget crisis, these positions have been placed on hold.

6. Other Business

Energy Planning provided by Mr. Flynn

- Several of the top staff responsible for ARRA Funding in the Energy office have left their positions. As a result of these vacancies, Ken Payne has been hired as a Consultant.
- Mr. Flynn will be co-chairing a meeting on September 11th. A Public Workshop is scheduled on September 17th @ 6:30pm in Providence. Notices were mailed on September 10th. We will discuss a series of requested proposals which will be broken down by energy conservation, dual energy, and then broken down by the types of applicants. There will be up to ten different RFP's with sliding dates. \$55M of ARRA funding will be spent on Energy.
- The new Chair on the Committee, in addition to Mr. Flynn, will be Dean David Farmer from the URI Graduate School of Oceanography who will replace Mr. Seemann.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared L. Rhodes, II
Secretary

Approved
9-10-09

Attachment 1

**Statewide Planning Program
CEDS Certification Procedure
By Robert Griffith, Ph. D, Chief, Office of Strategic Planning and Economic Development**